

# PICKENS COUNTY

## Honorable Ira B. Colvin

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## Council Priorities

### **1. All children will have parents who are knowledgeable of good parenting practices, age appropriate supervision and discipline techniques, and parent/child communication skills.**

*High number of youths involved in drug use and aggressive and/or violent acts have been indicated in the PRIDE Report for Pickens County. Also a high percentage of youths served by the Alternative School and/or adjudicated. The need for parenting programs to help parents is more involved in their child's education, community involvement, supervision, and discipline is also evident.*

### **2. Counseling programs will be available for children and families for mental health counseling, substance abuse prevention, and crisis counseling services.**

*Pickens County does not have a licensed counselor for youth either in private practice or in the area mental health provider, Indian Rivers.*

### **3. Adults will have employment opportunities to improve their ability to meet the basic needs of their family.**

*Pickens County's unemployment rate is higher than the state and nation. This has a tremendous impact on the health, education, and safety of the children in the county.*

# Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

## Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### Parenting programs

#### Action Steps

- 1) Encourage use of science based materials in parent education programs.
- 2) Appraise public and service agencies of availability of programs.
- 3) Develop plan to address barriers to attendance: transportation and childcare.

### Daycare/night care

#### Action Steps

- 1) Identify areas in county with greatest need for child care centers.
- 2) Encourage day/night care operators as a career opportunity.
- 3) Additional funds to provide childcare subsidies to low income parents.

### Prenatal care/delivery

#### Action Steps

- 1) Reinstate services/programs to the Public Health Department for prenatal care.
- 2) Incentives and encouragement to physicians to practice in rural areas.
- 3) Work with Pickens County Medical Center/DCH to reinstate delivery services in Pickens County.

## Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

### Lack of jobs in Pickens County

#### Action Steps

- 1) Fund workforce development programs (AIDT, FIT, Workforce Investment Act programs).
- 2) Support West Alabama Economic Development Association, and Pickens County Industrial Development Authority in securing business and industry.
- 3) Emphasize career education in the schools.

### Adult literacy

#### Action Steps

- 1) Support and fund adult literacy programs.
- 2) Support and fund resource for libraries.
- 3) Publicize adult literacy programs available in the county.

## **Encouraging two parent homes**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Include more family/relational skills training in school curriculum.
- 2) Lobby for tax incentives to keep families intact.
- 3) Involve church pastors and leaders in efforts.

## **Education**

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

## **Mentoring (adult and peer)**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Support funding for after school programs.
- 2) Referrals from social agencies to after-school programs.
- 3) Secure transportation to and from programs for youth.

## **Tutoring and academic after school programs**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Support funding for programs.
- 2) Provide referrals for students needing assistance.
- 3) Assist in identifying volunteers for programs.

## **Adult education programs**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Contact Legislators about continued funds for Adult Education/GED.
- 2) Publicize the availability of services in the county.
- 3) Provide funds for AIDT, FIT, and/or Workforce Development programs.

## **Health**

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

## **Obesity related to inadequate diets**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Work with Board of Education to remove unhealthy snacks from vending machines in schools.
- 2) Partner with Pickens County Diabetes Prevention Project.

## **Teen pregnancy prevention**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Seek funding for grants to provide abstinence based programs.
- 2) Provide Speakers Bureau for sexual responsibility, STD prevention, and other concerns.
- 3) Sponsor yearly teen expo for prevention of teen pregnancy.

## **Non-compliance with children's special health care needs**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Implement staffing and review committee ages 5-21.
- 2) Involve school nurse to encourage screenings.
- 3) Re-examine guidelines for Medicaid requirements or sanctions to parents.

## **Parent Involvement Skills**

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

## **Family counseling**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Encourage Indian Rivers Mental Health to employ a youth counselor and/or recruit private counseling providers for Pickens County.
- 2) Organize transportation system to provide transportation to sessions.
- 3) Mandate counseling (substance abuse, crisis, and other) as needed through court order for families involved in court system.

## **Parent involvement in school activities**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Help parents be proactive by interacting in the school system through volunteering.
- 2) Community service for parents of youth who were adjudicated in the court system.
- 3) Provide parent education classes.

## **Early parent involvement with children**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Secure programs to improve literacy skills for parents.
- 2) Support programs available in county: Begin Education Early and Dollar General Literacy program at Pickens County Family Resource Center.

## **Safety**

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

## **Drug abuse/alcohol use among minors**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Implement alcohol and other drugs prevention and intervention programs.
- 2) Provide drug education in schools.
- 3) Continue to fund drug abuse prevention programs.

## **Transportation concerns**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Encourage seat belt use through education and media.
- 2) Seat belt compliance checks by local police departments.
- 3) Involve local youth organizations to provide volunteer transportation to and from sports events to prevent lack of adult supervision for children walking to/from events.

## **Youth aggression and violence**

### **Action Steps**

- 1) Encourage funding of programs to prevention violence and bullying.
- 2) Provide conflict resolution training for students, educators, and parents.
- 3) Support local Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities programs through the schools and Pickens County Family Resource Center.

# **Policy Recommendations**

- Re-evaluate services provided through the Public Health Department (example: prenatal care, teen pregnancy prevention efforts).
- Funding for adult education, literacy, and workforce development.
- Funding for Children's Trust Fund program.
- Continued emphasis on locating industries in Alabama.